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Cook sets UM record

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MISSOULA--

Montana's George Cook set a new University of Montana 3,000 meter steeplechase record at the National AAU Track and Field Finals in Eugene, Ore., last weekend.

The Highland Falls, N.Y., sophomore ran 8:50.8 and finished 12th in the championships. His time bettered his previous record, 9:00.6, set last spring in Seattle.

Cook, who came on strong after a good performance the previous week at the NCAA finals in Seattle, earned the right to compete in two Olympic training camps this summer. Cook ran 18th at the NCAA finals with a 9:03 time.

Cook will participate in the distance Olympic training camp beginning July 11 in Missoula and at the middle distance camp in Seattle beginning August 26.

UM track coach Harley Lewis said Cook was voted the nation's "Outstanding Steeplechaser under 21-years."

Lewis said Cook's performance was "remarkable." His time was 17 seconds better than the Big Sky record set by Northern Arizona's Richard Sliney in Missoula this spring.

"I just wish George had not been sick all spring," Lewis said. Shortly after Cook ran 9:00.6 at the University of Washington Invitational on April 1, Cook caught the flu. He lost seven pounds and finished a weak fourth in the Big Sky finals with a 9:34.6 performance.

Cook said, "I'm just starting to come back and regain my strength and there are no more meets. I think I can do better---I had a lot left at Eugene."

The AAU steeplechase winner was Bowling Green's Sidney Sink who established a new American record at 8:26.4. The world record in the steeplechase is 8:22 set by Australia's Kerry O'Brien. The American record was set by George Young in 1968 at 8:30.6.

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